

FRANCISCO PIZARRO

Shortly after Hernando Cortés conquered the Aztecs of Mexico, another Spanish conquistador did the same to the Incas of Peru. His name was Francisco Pizarro. History tells us that he was just as cruel as Cortés.

When Francisco Pizarro was born, his mother was so poor that she left him at the door of a church. Because he had no real family, Francisco never learned to read and write. As a boy he worked as a swineherd, taking care of pigs.

When Pizarro was old enough, he became a soldier. He came to the New World in 1510 seeking fame and fortune. In 1513, he accompanied Vasco de Balboa in his discovery of the Pacific Ocean. Afterwards, Pizarro became a cattle rancher in Panama.

In the 1520s, Pizarro and some friends made two trips to Peru. What they saw was unbelievable: gold was everywhere, even lining the outer walls of temples. Returning to Spain with samples of gold ornaments, Pizarro convinced the king to finance an expedition to Peru.

Pizarro, along with his four brothers, landed in Peru in 1531. He had 180 men and 27 horses. With this small army he was able to conquer an empire of some six million Incas. This was due largely to the Incas being involved in a civil war. They were in no position to defend their empire against the Spaniards.

Pizarro captured Cuzco, the Incan capital. He took Atahualpa, the Incan emperor, prisoner and held him for ransom. Pizarro informed the Indians that Atahualpa would be freed if they filled a room with gold and jewels. The Incas readily obeyed. Gold meant nothing to them except as a means of decorating, so they quickly filled the room with the valuable metal. Then they waited for Atahualpa to be released.

But Pizarro proved to be just as untrustworthy as Cortés. Instead of freeing the Incan emperor, he had him strangled to death. All of Atahualpa's chief nobles and officials were killed also. With no one to lead them, the Incas of Peru were easily subdued by the Spaniards.

After the murder of Atahualpa, Pizarro had all of the gold melted into ingots, or bars. The total value of this treasure was more than nine million dollars. Pizarro sent one-fifth of this wealth to the king in Spain and divided the rest among his soldiers. He then founded the city of Lima, which became the new capital of Peru. Here he ruled with the title of marquis until 1541. In that year he was assassinated.

Pizarro's death was associated with the division of the Incan gold. One of the leaders of the expedition, Diego de Almagro, was not satisfied with the way the spoils were divided. As a result, Pizarro's brother Hernando had Almagro beheaded. Almagro's son later avenged his father's death. He killed Pizarro in his palace in Lima in 1541.

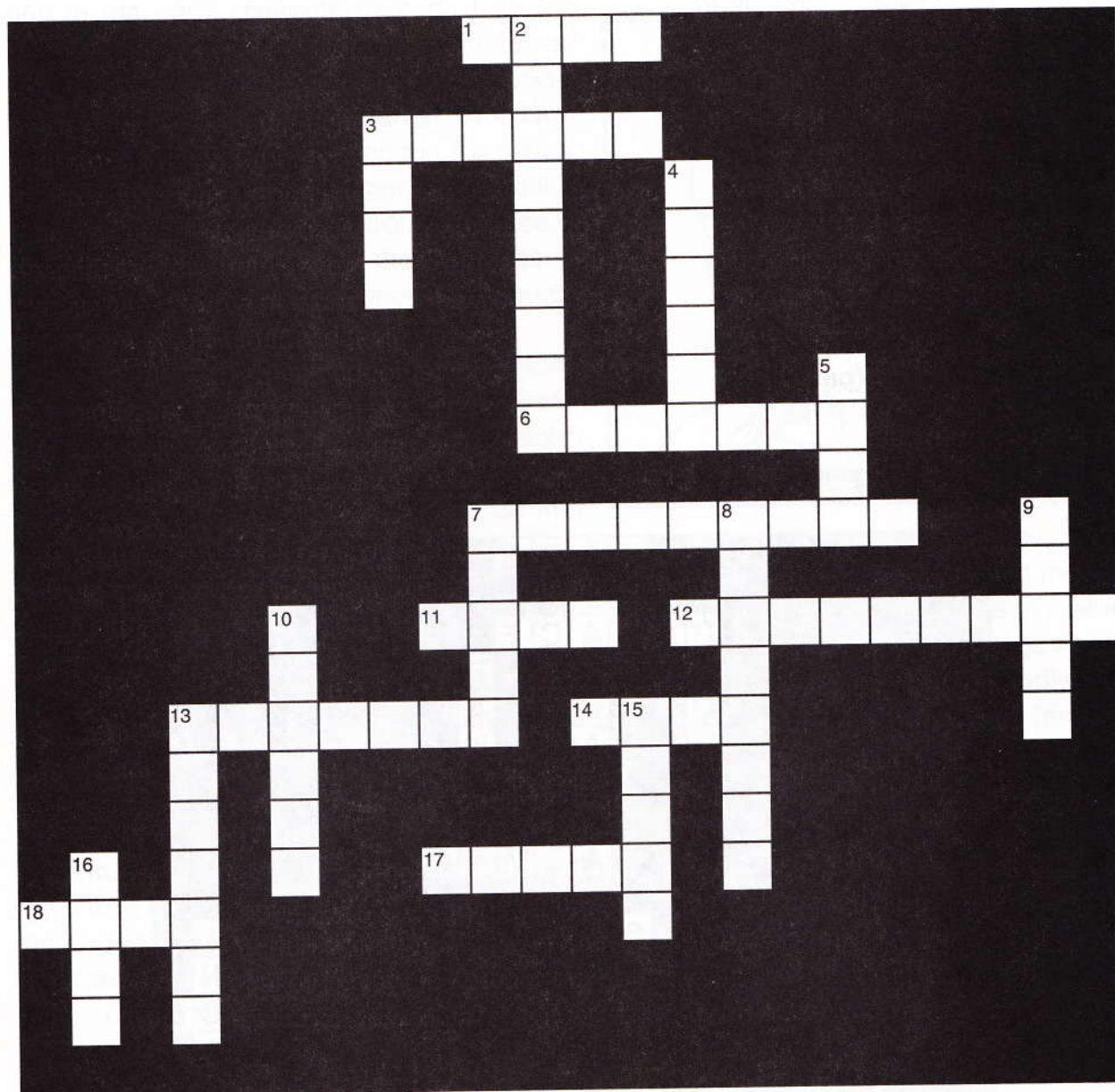
Francisco Pizarro added the lands of the Incas to the Spanish Empire. The treasury of Spain continued to bulge with the gold and silver of the New World.



Name _____ Date _____

FRANCISCO PIZARRO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Use the clues below and information from the narrative to complete the puzzle.

**ACROSS**

1. Pizarro sought _____ and fortune.
3. Building in which Pizarro was killed.
6. He was beheaded by Hernando Pizarro.
7. Pizarro's job as a young man.
11. Peru, _____ of the Incas.
12. _____ Pizarro.
13. Pizarro's gold ingots were worth nine _____ dollars.
14. Peruvian capital built by Pizarro.
17. Incan capital.
18. Country conquered by Pizarro.

DOWN

2. Incan emperor.
3. Pizarro's mother was very _____.
4. Where Pizarro was a cattle rancher.
5. Number of brothers Pizarro had.
7. Pizarro's native country.
8. One of Pizarro's brothers.
9. Indian empire conquered by Pizarro.
10. Discoverer of the Pacific Ocean.
13. Pizarro's title as ruler of Peru.
15. Gold bar.
16. Pizarro could not _____ or write.